REMARKS

In response to an earlier election of species requirement among Species A (Fig. 2), B (Fig. 3.) and C (Fig. 4), applicant elected Species A, with associated claims 19, 20, 21, 24, 28, 29 and 31. In the outstanding official action, claims 19-21, 24, 28, 29 and 31 were finally rejected. Further prosecution is requested under the presently filed RCE.

All grounds for rejection and objection stated in the official action dated February 22, 2007 were overcome in applicant's Response filed May 25, 2007. In the outstanding official action, new grounds for rejection were stated against all the claims. In particular, independent claims 19 and 20 as well as dependent claims 21, 24, 29, and 31 were rejected under 35 USC §103 as obvious in view of the combined disclosures of DE 3144561 and US 6,475,337 (hereinafter, DE '561 and US '337). Applicant respectfully traverses.

Document DE '561 discloses in Fig. 2 a device for aerating suspensions including a plurality of cells (11 and 11') along with a washing process via screens, where each cell has its own liquid loop. The washer is not located in the internal flow loop for removing some of the impurities, in the portion of the impure fluid flow. Instead, the washer is located downstream in the accept flow of a floatation cell.

Document US '337 discloses primary flotation cells having a separate liquid circulating system including an injector, which mixes air and pulp suspension.

A combination of these two embodiments would result in a flotation device including a plurality of cells, where each cell has its internal flow loop with injectors for aerating the pulp suspension and a washer, which is interposed between two successive cells, to wash the accept of one cell before it enters the next flotation cell. It would not produce a device where the washer is interposed in the liquid loop itself.

To emphasize this significant difference relative to these references, taken alone or in combination, the feature of claim 31 of "removing some of said impurities in said portion of said impure fluid in said internal flow loop before recycling the impure fluid flow back to the flotation cell" has been incorporated in independent claims 19 and 20. These claims are directed to the embodiment of flotation stages, so that term rather then "cells" appears in the amendment. It is also clear from Fig. 2 and page 6 beginning

at line 26 that the washer removes some of said impurities in said portion of said impure fluid in said internal flow loop before recycling the impure fluid flow back to the same flotation stage.

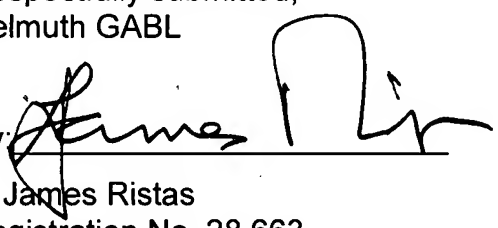
Claim 31 is still properly dependent on claim 20, in reciting the flotation "cell", rather than "stage". Claim 31 has been amended to recite "same" and to correct the spelling of "flotation" for consistency.

Applicant submits that the independent claims are allowable, and as a consequence, all dependent claims are likewise allowable. Independent claims 19 and 20 are generic to all species A, B and C and thus all claims 19-31 should be allowable in this application.

Without conceding the propriety of the provisional nonstatutory double patenting rejection, applicant encloses a terminal disclaimer that should render this rejection moot.

Applicant believes that all rejections and objections have been overcome, and requests that a Notice of Allowance be forthcoming.

Respectfully submitted,
Helmuth GABL

By: 

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